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ABSTRACT

This document is a "theme" issue of a quarterly serial publication. It focuses on identifying and serving gifted children from diverse populations. The first article, "Eliminating Four Barriers to the Identification of Gifted Minority Students" by Mary Frasier, notes that: (1) not every impoverished home is illiterate; (2) limited opportunities for learning should not be assumed to restrict the child's achievement; (3) there are common mental traits of giftedness regardless of the child's background; and (4) giftedness may manifest itself differently in different children. The second article, "Gifted Learning Disabled Students: Questions and Answers," by Anne J. Udall, answers questions concerning the characteristics of such students, their prevalence, and the best ways to meet their curriculum needs. Next, Mary T. Kolesinski in "The Bilingual Gifted: Viable Strategies for Effective Programming" proposes strategies for improving the identification process and teaching strategies to address the special needs of these students. In the fourth paper, "An Update on the Javits Project: Identifying and Serving Disadvantaged Gifted Youth," Evelyn L. Hiatt presents preliminary information on the Texas Student Portfolio (TSP), a measure designed to provide unbiased assessment of characteristics associated with gifted students, especially as they pertain to critical and creative thinking. (The TSP is part of a 3-year project undertaken by the Texas Education Agency with funding from the Jacob K. Javits Gifted Students Education Act of 1988. The project's purpose is to fulfill the grant's objective to investigate nontraditional approaches to identifying and serving underrepresented populations in programs for the gifted.) Finally, Evelyn Hiatt and Jeanette Covington respond to common questions on identifying and serving diverse populations. (DB)

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UPDATE ON GIFTED EDUCATION

IDENTIFYING AND SERVING DIVERSE POPULATIONS

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update
on gifted education

VOL. 1, NO. 3, FALL 1991

Identifying and Serving Diverse Populations

"All children can learn." This statement is accepted by most educators. However, do we believe that all groups of children have the potential to reach the highest levels of achievement? Are our educational practices compatible with the assumption that advanced talent in academic areas and cognitive ability may be found in children of all colors, cultures, and economic stratas? This notion is the very foundation of equal opportunity for programs that serve students with the highest potential in academic ability.

In Texas, we are fortunate to have laws and rules that allow for greater flexibility in identifying and serving students for gifted programs. Unfortunately, some districts are not using this flexibility to enrich their programs for gifted students. Many times, this is due, not to any overt action, but to practices and measures that do not enable all children to reveal their considerable and diverse talents. In this issue of *Update on Gifted Education,* educators from Texas and across the nation offer their insights into ways that we can improve our abilities to identify and serve gifted children in all our school populations. When the programs that address high academic ability reflect our total school population, we will know that we have finally reached the elusive goal of educational equity.

This publication was developed by Agency staff members in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Special Programs.

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Eliminating Four Barriers to the Identification of Gifted Minority Students

Mary Frasier
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia

In February 1991, Dr. Mary Frasier, from the Torrance Center at the University of Georgia, presented the keynote session at the statewide conference sponsored by the Texas Education Agency on program planning for gifted students. Her presentation focused on four barriers that impact the identification of economically disadvantaged students. This article offers excerpts from that speech.

It is my pleasure to be back with you in Texas. Before I start, I would like to share with you the position that I take on this topic. There are about three things that are important and that were important to me in shaping these ideas.

First of all, I am not arguing against or for the traditional identification procedure. It has done well what it was intended to do, and that is to identify high IQ children. However, we know that there is something else that it can do, and that's the part we will focus on tonight. Traditional measures have not done as good a job in finding children who do not perform well on some of the components that are included on the test. It also gives false hope to some parents—and this is a national situation—who will engage in having their children tested until they reach the criteria that is required for identification.

The second thing that I don't believe in is a quota system. I think that quotas are short-term solutions to a much more complex problem. I believe that we can put our best talents to the task of finding bright children from disadvantaged backgrounds without putting in artificial methods.

The third thing is to acknowledge that we must use different criteria to find these children. But we also must consider those criteria as being as legitimate as the objective tests and viewed as equal to other measures.

Now to my topic, the four barriers to the identification of gifted minority students. These four barriers are:

- attitudes regarding the abilities of these children to achieve;
- access that is limited due to screening procedures used by districts;
- assessment that focuses on the IQ;
- adaptations to curriculum rather than accommodations.

In this presentation, I will share some of my recommendations regarding how we can get around those barriers.

Let us look at attitude. Attitude refers to a mental position with regard to a fact, or state, or feeling, or emotions toward a fact, or state. Despite the progress that we have made in identifying students for participation in programs for the gifted, we still have too many negative attitudes regarding giftedness in minority groups. There are several factors that have contributed to these attitudes. We say that one of the reasons we can't find these children is that they come from anti-intellectual environments, or unstable families, and homes and communities that provide poor or no role-models. We say they have low self-concepts, and have huge gaps or deficits in basic skills, with particular deficiencies in verbal skills that affect their performance on standardized tests.

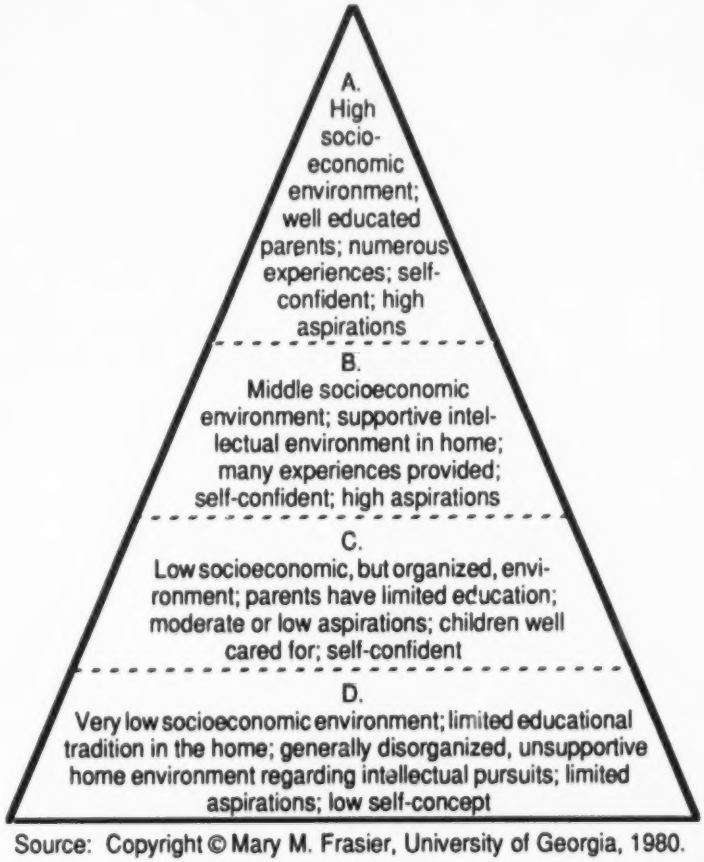
I prefer taking a proactive stance. In what ways can we eradicate these negative attitudes, these things that are barriers, that get in our way of really looking at the child, that get in the way of giving children an opportunity to say what they can do, and giving us the best opportunity to observe the potential that they have? There are four things that I would like to share with you.

- Not every impoverished home is necessarily illiterate.
- Limited opportunities to learning should not be assumed to permanently restrict the achievement of a child.
- We must focus on common mental traits of giftedness that reside in children, regardless of their background.
- We must understand and accept that giftedness may manifest itself differently in different children.

Let me comment on the first two, and share with you a couple of ways of getting at notions regarding impoverished homes and the alleged limited opportunities that those homes provide. Earlier, I developed a representation of the heterogeneity within minority populations. (Figure 1) I offer that to you as a way to look at the group instead of making generalizations regarding the group. That's what has gotten us into trouble. When people focus on what I call my family types, rather than generalizing and saying that, as an example, all black children are alike, we begin to see the children more clearly. We focus on the environment from which the children come, and thus can make better decisions regarding the adjustments that may need to be made if we are to recognize their ability. As you can see, the chart suggests that if we were to categorize them in

FIGURE 1

Black Family Types


A.
High socio-economic environment; well educated parents; numerous experiences; self-confident; high aspirations
B.
Middle socioeconomic environment; supportive intellectual environment in home; many experiences provided; self-confident; high aspirations
C.
Low socioeconomic, but organized, environment; parents have limited education; moderate or low aspirations; children well cared for; self-confident
D.
Very low socioeconomic environment; limited educational tradition in the home; generally disorganized, unsupportive home environment regarding intellectual pursuits; limited aspirations; low self-concept

Source: Copyright © Mary M. Frasier, University of Georgia, 1980.

some way—and these are not necessarily discrete units—that in any population group, we have persons who are at the highest economic level, down to persons who are at extremely dysfunctional levels. I would submit to you that the characteristics of the children who are in the very lowest group have too long been the way in which we have characterized all minority children. Recognizing the heterogeneity in groups is one way that we can begin to get a grip on this problem and begin to change our attitudes toward them.

Also, we will find that current research is moving away from focusing on the education and occupation of parents, and is examining the interactive environment to see the way in which these things affect students. What kind of language modeling occurs within the family? What kind of academic guidance do parents give their children, regardless of their circumstances? In what kind of activities do families engage? What is the intellectuality of the home; the work habits of the family? The more closely we examine these factors, the clearer our notion will be regarding the families of these children. When we do this, we cannot continue to hold some of the generalizations that we now make.

The third issue focuses on common mental traits of giftedness in children. James Gallagher and Paul Witty identified five generic traits that gifted children exhibit regardless of their economic state. If we were to focus on these five traits, focus on the children and their generation of these, I think we would help ourselves in terms of eliminating the attitudes that we've had. Those five things are as follows:

- The ability to meaningfully manipulate a symbol system regardless of the talent area that a person has. It may be verbal, it may be analytical, it may be musical, or it may be artistic. Whatever the symbol system of that particular area is, we should focus on how these children show their extraordinary abilities in manipulating that symbol system.

- The second ability is to think logically, given appropriate information or appropriate data.

- Third is the ability to use stored knowledge to solve problems. We know that one of the things about gifted children is their ability to not only amass information, but to bring that information forward to the solution of problems.

- Fourth is the ability to reason by analogy.

- And last is the ability to extend or extrapolate knowledge to new situations of unique application, or to take information and do something with it—the kinds of things that we refer to when we refer to creativity.

These five abilities are present in gifted children of all populations.

This leads us to another point. We must get clear in our minds what we mean when we talk about gifted and talented children. What are the constructs that underlie our assumptions? Figure 2 is from a publication put out by Good Apple and it makes a distinction between bright children and gifted children. We know that we need to focus on children who don't just know the answers, but the children who ask questions. Gifted children exhibit extraordinary abilities to ask questions. That is how we get breakthroughs. We know that we are talking about children who are able to achieve mastery rapidly. Our task is to look at that ability both within and outside of school activities. We know that these are not just children who absorb information; they are capable of manipulating information. They are not children who are just alert, they are children who are keenly observant about all the various things that happen.

The last thing to understand about attitude is that behaviors associated with giftedness may be manifested differently. The University of Georgia is part of a consortium of four universities that form the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. As part of that project, each of us is focusing on a particular area. I am focusing on investigating giftedness in economically disadvantaged populations. The groups that we are primarily focusing on in terms of economically disadvantaged children are African Americans, Hispanics (with all of the differ-

FIGURE 2

BRIGHT CHILD	GIFTED LEARNER
Knows the answers.	Asks the questions.
Is interested.	Is highly curious.
Is attentive.	Is mentally and physically involved.
Has good ideas.	Has wild, silly ideas.
Works hard.	Plays around, yet tests well.
Answers the questions.	Discusses in detail, elaborates.
Top group.	Beyond the group.
Listens with interest.	Shows strong feelings and opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.
6-8 repetitions for mastery.	1-2 repetitions for mastery.
Understands ideas.	Constructs abstractions.
Enjoys peers.	Prefers adults.
Grasps the meaning.	Draws inferences.
Completes assignments.	Initiates projects.
Is receptive.	Is intense.
Copies accurately.	Creates a new design.
Enjoys school.	Enjoys learning.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.
Technician.	Inventor.
Good memorizer.	Good guesser.
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation.	Thrives on complexity.
Is alert.	Is keenly observant.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is highly self-critical.

by Janice Szabos

Challenge, Copyright 1989, Good Apple, Inc.

ent variations), Native Americans (we've also included Native Hawaiians and Native Alaskans), Caucasians, Asians--all of the various groups according to their low socioeconomic status. One of the things that we are attempting to do in our research project is to look at giftedness, to look at children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and to try to identify what some overarching constructs are that underlie the concept of giftedness. We have come up with a number of things that we feel are important. We are looking for students, not in terms of the way we typically look for them which is how they are represented on checklists, but by asking people to explore the manifestations of these particular constructs across a number of different groups.

As examples, two checklist items include motivation and interest. We're trying to explore the various things that turn these children on. Who encourages them? Who do they feel they can go to for help? What are they interested in? What are they not interested in? Who in their world space provides them with the assistance they need? We're trying to look for the different ways in which this is manifested across a variety of groups. As an example, rather than just focusing on the verbal indicators, we're trying to look at the communication construct. As we look at communication, we are suggesting that we need to describe how these children communicate. We want to keep in mind that communication is a very broad concept that is both receptive and expressive, so we're trying to interpret that construct in its very broadest sense.

We're trying to look at the construct of memory. I think we have all accepted the fact that bright children are able to amass quite a bit of information. As we try to get at that across a variety of groups, we are asking things like, "Tell me about the child who knows more about something than anyone else that you know." All of us have been in situations in which we have said, "This child amazes me with what she knows." When we can acknowledge the various things that students know, and not concentrate on what we want them to know, we will find some who have extraordinary abilities.

We're trying to examine the problem-solving construct. We are looking at this both in terms of school and outside of school activities. We're looking for those children—and I'll bet any one of

you could think of children like this—who always have a Plan A, or B, or C. They have a way to solve problems. If one way doesn't work, they go to another. Those are the children who are demonstrating extraordinary ability and can give us some indications of their ability to make the breakthroughs that we have come to associate with giftedness in our society.

We are also looking at inquiry. We are trying to broaden this whole concept instead of just confining ourselves to what on a list typically says, "Gifted children ask a lot of questions." This keeps us from assessing children in certain population groups who don't ask questions, or who haven't been socialized to ask questions. What we are saying is, "Tell us about how these children inquire into their world, how they find out about things." We feel that getting some answers or some observations on these kinds of things will give us a better notion regarding the different ways in which children in different population groups inquire into their world.

I also would like to share a few ideas on the second barrier—that of access. When we talk about access, we are referring to permission, liberty, or the ability to enter, approach, communicate with, or pass to and from. In gifted programs, we know that access tends to refer to the way in which children are considered for placement in gifted programs. James Gallagher once said that if a child does not get a chance to come to bat, that child does not get a chance to hit. We have to look at some of our access methods. We know that the usual method is through some form of nomination by individuals or some form of screening with tests. It is highly recommended and we all read the literature that recommends to us that we should use broad-based screening procedures in order to gather data from a variety of sources. Not only paper sources, but people sources.

Let's look at some ways in which we can provide these children access by looking to sources of data other than teacher recommendations or checklists. Here are some suggestions from a report that looked at successful children from economically disadvantaged and minority groups. The first one was a sense of identity, or that strong sense of self, of pride, and of worth. I think this characteristic is particularly worthy of note, because it relates to the attention currently being paid to reinforcing the establishment of one's cultural identity or cultural heritage. In addition to that, another characteristic of these children is their freedom from conditioning, or exhibiting a kind of freedom from the routine brainwashing that's normally succumbed to by others. Another is their questioning orientation—their ability to ask questions such as: "Who am I? Where am I going? What is the meaning of life?" These children had an awareness of alternative paths that helped them develop their abilties and reach their goals. They were willing to endure the anxieties, suspense, disappointment and humiliation, of experimenting with new behaviors; and there was also a willingness to experiment with new ideas. Remember that Dr. Paul Torrance always reminded us that very bright people will always find themselves creating minorities of one.

The last characteristic of successful children from economically disadvantaged settings is the channeling of rage—the ability to channel rage that a lot of people feel because of the barriers that are placed against them as members of certain groups. These children channel that rage into very productive action. Some of the people that I have had the opportunity, and am having the opportunity to work with, represent for me very obviously that ability to channel that rage. This comes up in the work of Stuart Tonema, and the work that he's doing with Native Americans; Dr. Ernie Bernal, and his study of giftedness in Mexican American children; the work that Joyce Oatman is doing in the urban areas in Chicago; and of David Sing in Hawaii, where he is strategically planning ways to identify Native Hawaiian children.

Another thing that we can do to increase access is to focus on behaviors that indicate giftedness. I was very pleased to see in your *Texas State Plan and Guidelines for the Education of the Gifted/Talented*, that a reference is made to the work of Elizabeth Hagen, who assessed behaviors that

indicate potential giftedness. She talks about things like students' use of language. If you think about that a moment, if you think about our great writers and the people that we call geniuses in that particular area, we never really count how many words they have in their vocabulary. We really get excited about the profound ideas that they are able to communicate through the written word. So one of the things that we can do is to observe how children use language. We can observe the quality of the questions, not just the quantity of the questions that they ask. We can observe their abilities to devise or adopt systematic strategies to solve problems and to change that strategy if it's not working. Lists like Elizabeth Hagen's remind us that giftedness is a dynamic, not a static, process, that it is constantly evolving, and that it is developmental. (Figure 3) It is not something that we can at one point in time determine. It is constantly evolving and we must be alert to it.

Now let's look at the next "A", and that one is assessment. Assessment refers to appraising, estimating, or evaluating the presence of something—and to what degree. In gifted education, we are looking at having the extraordinary possession of abilities, but not just in having ability. As we know, typically this task involves collecting test data on children. Studies clearly show the information typically used to place children in talented and gifted programs focus on three pieces of data—the intelligence test, the achievement test, and teacher nominations. In fact, many districts require that the IQ be at a certain predetermined level and this is the single common factor across what we do.

I think that we can do something about that. We can give more than lip service to the recommendation that Harry Passow has suggested and that we have probably all made. That is to use a variety of sources to adequately identify gifted behaviors. Passow noted that we need to employ a much broader, more varied procedure for identifying gifted and talented children, particularly those from disadvantaged populations . If you think about it for just a moment, you realize this benefits even children who are not from those populations. We then have maximum

FIGURE 3

Characteristics Related to Potential Giftedness

1. Student's use of language. .
2. Quality of student's questions.
3. Quality of examples, illustrations, or elaborations that a student uses in explaining something or in describing events or in telling stories.
4. Student's use of quantitative expressions and quantitative reasoning.
5. Student's ability to devise or adopt a systematic strategy for solving problems and to change the strategy if it is not working.
6. Special skills students exhibit that are unusual for their age or grade.
7. Student's innovative use of common materials in the classroom or outside of it.
8. Student's breadth of information.
9. Student's depth of information in a particular area.
10. Student's collections of materials or hobbies.
11. Student's persistence on uncompleted tasks.
12. Student's absorption in intellectual tasks.
13. Extensiveness of student's exploratory behavior.
14. Student's criticalness of his or her own performance.
15. Student's preferences for complexity, difficulty, and novelty in tasks.

Source: Elizabeth Hagen, *Identification of the Gifted.*

information on all children so we can make the best decisions regarding the curriculum, the program prototype and the evaluation procedures that we might use.

I'd like to share some things to give you an idea where I've been going in that particular area. Some of you may know that I have been working on the development of a profile. (Figure 4) This profile suggests to a school district that we look for a variety

FIGURE 4

FRASIER-TALENT ASSESSMENT PROFILE: PILOT FORM

Submitted By:

Name:		DOB:
Date:	Grade:	Sex:
School Number:		Race:
City:	State:	Zip:
Currently Enrolled:		Not Enrolled:

Percentile		0.1		2		16		50		84		98	99.9
Stanine		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
		Below Average				Average				Above Average			
Dev IQ		52		68		84		100		116		132	148
Std Dev		-3		-2		-1		Mean		+1		+2	+3
Likert Scale		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

	O	S	Test/Rating Scale/Rater Observer/Product/Performance/ Descriptor, etc.
Creativity Aptitude/Achievement			
The Arts Aptitude/Achievement			
Leadership Aptitude/Achievement			
Motivation Self-Report/Observations			
Academic Aptitude/Achievement			

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of ways to access abilities. It includes a multi-scale analysis so that we can interpret information that comes from a variety of sources. The multiple-scale analysis at the top includes Likert Scale, stanines, percentiles, and standard deviations that allow us to compare information across a number of categories. It causes us to put our best minds to work on making decisions based on that information, and helps us to get a little bit beyond the notion of adding points together and coming up with a conclusion. It suggests to us that we should look at a number of things relative to personal characteristics, special language considerations, and certain mediating factors such as one's environment, and how they might impact curriculum decisions, not just how they might impact whether a child is gifted or not. If we follow that process all the way through, you will see that it should lead us into making the best decisions regarding the program options, curriculum options, counseling options that we should use, and also should provide us with optimal information regarding evaluating the progress of the students in gifted and talented programs. To summarize, one of the things that I've tried to show graphically is that the profile does not take information from a number of sources and pull it together into one score leading us to one program. Rather, the profile takes a variety of information from a number of different sources, evaluates that information in terms of the strengths and needs of students, and then uses that information to guide appropriate program, curriculum, counseling and evaluation decisions.

The last barrier to inclusion of economically disadvantaged children in gifted programs relates to curricular adaptation. It's very critical to focus on the fact that once we have identified these students we must address the issue of what we do with them. I have chosen to use the word "adapt," rather than "accommodate," to describe appropriate curriculum practices. To accommodate means to make fit, to adjust, to reconcile differences. It implies a subordinating of one thing to the needs of another, and suggests concessions or compromises. Adaptation, however, refers to a change in structure, function, or form that produces better adjustments of an animal or plant to its environment. In sociological terms, it means a gradual change in behavior to conform to the prevailing cultural pattern. This doesn't mean giving up one's identity to conform to the patterns of another group. I believe that while gifted minority students may need to have certain adaptations made for them in their curriculum, they do not need to be accommodated. To adapt a curriculum means that we are saying to these children that they can be whatever their abilities dictate, while maintaining who they are. The thought we convey to them is "I can be Me, I can be whatever it is that I desire to be," and also, "I am Me."

Now let's briefly look at what some of those curriculum adaptations may be. First of all, I make the assumption that the modifications we make in curriculum to help gifted children develop their extraordinary abilities are the same as we do for all children. I think that Barbara Clarks' delineation expresses it quite well:

> For gifted children, regardless, we should provide them with opportunities and experiences particularly suited to their needs and through which they can continue developing their potential. We should establish an environment that values and enhances intelligence, talent, effective growth, and intuitive ability. We should provide them with the time, space, and encouragement to discover themselves, their powers, and abilities to become all that they can be. We should provide them opportunities to interact with children and adults of various abilities, and to be challenged to know and revere humanity for its uniqueness and its connectedness. And finally we should encourage them to find their places in human evolution by discovering what abilities and in what areas they wish to contribute.

I think those are good suggestions in terms of curriculum adaptations for all gifted children.

From my personal experiences, I would add what I think are a few necessities. The first is that we should establish clear standards of excellence. This is needed as a model for these children. The

second is an emphasis on the skills of future problem solving. I don't say that because I'm from the University of Georgia, and work with Dr. E. Paul Torrance. I think, though, that teaching students skills of futuring gives them a chance to systematically explore a real problem. By learning how to follow through from the identification of a problem to the development of a plan to implement a solution, these children can learn how to create their own futures.

We should be mindful of the need to include in curriculum and counseling experiences techniques of mental imagery and guided fantasy. This will assist these children in developing an awareness of alternative careers and approaches to educational, social, and personal challenges. To use one's imagination is to see all possibilities and to see all that can be done. We should include decision making skills in our curricula. I think we are aware of the fact that life is a do-it-yourself process. However, disadvantaged children may need to learn some of the techniques to make the system more responsive to their needs. These include skills such as persuading, bargaining, and appropriately asserting one's self.

Finally, we should assist these students in getting a mentor. I chose not to say a role model because I sometimes think the notion of role model suggests a person who says, "Look at me, but don't touch. Look at what I did, but don't touch." I would prefer to suggest to you a mentor. A mentor to me is a partner, it's a partner who says, "Let's touch. I see you as a capable individual." "I see you as a diamond in the rough," as Alexinia Baldwin has described these children. "Let's touch, and together make the rough edges go away. Don't do as I say, let's do it together."

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a few principles. The first is that the gifted are a diverse group and that equals diverse expression and that equals diverse procedures. We cannot continue to hold tenaciously to traditional methods. That would make us guilty of conveying the notion that the gifted are a homogeneous group who demonstrate their potential according to one set of standards and in exactly the same way.

The second is to acknowledge, not only that we must use different procedures to find these children, but we also must consider these procedures to be legitimate. Methods of locating children and youth capable of gifted performance can be varied without eroding quality, and without requiring excessive data collection or expenditure of time. Soliciting inquiries from a variety of sources does not compromise a decision; such solicitations enrich a decision.

Third, focus on gifted behaviors. I strongly believe that data on certain personality traits, socioeconomic factors, and physical traits should be considered *only* as they effect the kinds of curriculum and program that we develop for children, not to determine whether they can or cannot be gifted.

As I was coming to Austin I was glancing through a Time magazine, and I came across an advertisement. It struck my attention because it talked about promises to keep, and I would like to share with you a little bit from that to see if you would join me in keeping promises to all our gifted children. This advertisement showed a father and a child, and it was talking about promises and the father said, "I promise to attend recitals, late meetings withstanding. I promise not to show up when you are with your friends at the mall. I promise to keep it all safe, no matter what..." And it continued, "Nothing binds us, one to the other, more than a promise. Nothing divides us like a promise broken."

I have committed myself, my life, and my work to keeping promises to all of our gifted children. I invite you to join me in eliminating the four barriers and keeping our promise to seeking out all children with extraordinary potential. Thank you very much.

Gifted Learning Disabled Students:

questions and answers

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Over the past 20 years, individuals interested in gifted learning disabled students have raised a number of key questions about this unique population. These questions cover such topics as the seeming paradox contained within the concept of gifted learning disabled students, the characteristics of these students and their prevalence in our school districts, and the best way to meet their curriculum needs. Using the latest research and knowledge about gifted learning disabled students, these questions are posed and then answered in this article.

Dr. Udall will be the keynote speaker at the Conference on Providing Programs for Gifted/ Talented Students, sponsored by the Texas Education Agency, February 16-18, 1992.

Increasing attention is being given to gifted learning disabled children (e.g., Barton & Starnes, 1989; Baum, 1988; Minner, 1990). Although we still lack a solid body of research that supports either specific identification techniques or curriculum models, we have learned a fair amount about these students from a number of small studies (e.g., Baum & Owen, 1988; Hannah, 1989; Hansford, Whitmore, Kraynak, & Wingenbach, 1987; Schiff, Kaufman, & Kaufman, 1981) and shared anecdotal information (e.g., Baum, Emerick, Herman, & Dixon, 1989; Fox, Brody, & Tobin, 1983; Steeves, 1980; Udall & Maker, 1983; Whitmore & Maker, 1985). Our expanded knowledge has led to a greater understanding of the characteristics and needs of gifted learning disabled children and has helped answer a number of key questions about this unique population. These questions and the subsequent answers will be addressed in this article.

Can Children Be Both Gifted and Learning Disabled?

This question arises primarily because of commonly held stereotypes of both gifted and learning disabled (LD) students. Take a moment and think of the adjectives the uninformed might associate with the gifted. For example, one might say that all gifted students achieve in school, while all the time being well-rounded and socially adjusted. Contrast this image with the common one of learning disabled students: awkward, average intellect, not very creative, and socially inept. These distorted images make it difficult, at first thought, to imagine a student being both gifted and learning disabled.

The belief that one cannot be both gifted and learning disabled is further compounded by society's deep-seated need, both philosophically and pragmatically, to fit students into tidy "pigeon holes." This need is reflected in the structure of our school system, where pullout programs and special services exist for identified students meeting strict criteria. One student per "pigeonhole" is the norm; educators are reluctant to consider that some students might require multiple services. This belief translates into the common practice of placing students into either the gifted program *OR* the LD resource room, but not in both.

Yet current definitions of giftedness and learning disabilities embrace the concept of a student who is both gifted and learning disabled. For example, the 1972 United States Office of Education (USOE) definition (the

one most commonly used in programs for the gifted) states: "Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities, are *capable* [italics added] of high performance.... Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement *and/or potential ability* [italics added]...(Marland, 1972, p. 10)." Similarly contemporary definitions of the learning disabled state clearly that students with above normal intelligence are acceptable; LD students must only demonstrate a discrepancy between ability and achievement, academic failure, and a psychological process disorder (Gearheart & Gearheart, 1989)—all possible problems a gifted child might face. In short, definitions of giftedness and learning disabilities leave ample room to identify gifted learning disabled students; only our attitudes make this reality elusive.

Knowing that gifted learning disabled students are possible is different from believing that they are probable. Yet, when asked, most educators will say they have known a student who is both gifted and learning disabled. Moreover, research supports their experiences. Mauser (1980), in the state of Illinois, found that 2.3% of the identified LD population was gifted, using the simple criterion of having a score of 120 or above on either the Performance or Verbal Scale of the WISC-R. The author found similar statistics in her program for gifted/LD students (Udall, 1985).[1]

Both Mauser and Udall located gifted students *within* the learning disability population. Such students are initially referred for special education services because their learning problems draw attention while also disguising any giftedness. When tested, high intelligence scores are uncovered. Most of the research on gifted learning disabled students is conducted with this population.

However, in addition to the group of students found in special education programs, two more "hidden" groups of learning disabled gifted students are in our classrooms. The second group of students are in the gifted programs with some learning problems. Teachers or parents might wonder if these students are learning disabled, but because the child is in the gifted program, little is done. The final group of students are in regular classrooms. These students "get by," and therefore, neither their giftedness nor disability is ever recognized.

Because so many gifted LD students may remain undiscovered, the exact prevalence of this population may never be known. Yet, clearly, these children are in our classrooms in large enough numbers to warrant attention. Therefore, if we are going to locate gifted/LD students we must not only employ expansive definitions (such as the USOE one cited above), but we also need to be familiar with the behaviors these students exhibit.

What Do Gifted Learning Disabled Students Look Like?

Gifted learning disabled students possess the same characteristics any gifted students have—for example, ability to see complex relationships, heightened sensitivity to people and ideas, and quickness of mind. In addition, they have many traits of learning disabled students—difficulty processing information, low self-esteem, and poor academic skills.

However, gifted learning disabled students manifest these characteristics in a different way than either of these groups. Comparison studies of gifted, gifted/LD, and LD students have shown that gifted learning disabled students are a distinct population. One notable study, conducted by Baum and Owen (1988), found that gifted/LD students are more creative than their LD peers and seem to have more productive extra-curricular activities than both of the other groups. However, the gifted learning disabled students are also more disruptive in school, do not fit in well with peers, and are more likely to see themselves as academic failures than the other two groups. Baum and Owen conclude that this

[1] The only rare students in this program were females; in six years, out of over 100 students, only four girls were identified.

sense of inefficacy in school is the distinguishing factor among all three groups.

In addition to comparison studies, a number of individuals have listed behavioral traits of gifted learning disabled students (e.g., Baum & Owen, 1988; Silverman, 1987; Udall, 1985). Figure 1 lists a compilation of these characteristics. Notice how these students demonstrate characteristics of both gifted and learning disabled students. Nevertheless, because research is limited primarily to one type of gifted LD student, be cautious of making too many generalizations. Because these students exhibit such a wide assortment of behaviors that may vary from one setting to another, identification techniques need to be as expansive as possible.

How Do We Identify Gifted Learning Disabled Students?

Once a general idea of characteristics is determined, identifying gifted learning disabled students becomes the next priority. A case study approach is the best identification method. Such an approach is simple: collect as much information as possible from as many sources as possible, and then review each student (or "case") individually for placement.

The first stage is to collect referrals of possible students. Referrals can be collected formally or informally. Teachers are usually the most likely source. In one study in Texas, over 30% of the referrals of high ability learning disabled students came from classroom teachers (Boodoo, Bradley, Frontera, Pitts, & Wright, 1989). Besides the classroom teacher, other referral sources can be tapped. These include parents, teachers of the learning disabled, teachers of the gifted, psychologists or diagnosticians, social workers, counselors, community leaders, and principals, as well as test scores.

Once students are referred, a variety of information can be collected. Sources include intellectual testing (e.g., WISC-R), achievement testing (e.g., the Woodcock-Johnson), process testing (e.g., the Detroit), student interviews, student self-evaluation, parent inventory, teacher inventory, developmental history, student products, classroom observation, and past records.

In a case study approach, the final identification stage is to review the gathered data to determine if 1) the child is gifted and learning disabled and 2) if so, then can he or she benefit from the services in the school district. Two questions should be asked when making the first determination: 1) does the child clearly demonstrate both giftedness and a learning disability and 2) what children show the most potential giftedness in face of the most severe disability? When ascertaining

FIGURE 1

Characteristics of
Gifted Learning Disabled Students

1. verbal expression—i.e., has lots to say about topics of interest
2. problem solving skills
3. sense of humor
4. leadership
5. creativity in arts, music, drama
6. low motivation; in the classroom
7. a fear of taking risks in the school setting
8. good memory for topics of interest; poor memory for academic tasks
9. difficulty on timed, written tasks
10. short attention span
11. easily distracted; highly energetic
12. poor self-concept
13. not interested in details
14. extremely poor organizational skills
15. uninhibited in expression of opinion
16. varied interests outside of the classroom

the possible benefits of placement, the primary consideration is matching the child's curriculum needs with the program offerings.

Can Gifted Learning Disabled Students Be Served In Our Schools?

Even given the design of schools and the difficulties in identification, the needs of gifted learning disabled students can be met within the current structure. However, certain conditions are necessary. First, the belief must be accepted that gifted learning disabled students exist and need services. Then, educators of the gifted and learning disabled must learn to talk to each other more and work collaboratively. Finally, students must have access to all appropriate services.

If this groundwork is laid, a number of service delivery models are available. Various school districts have used such alternatives as 1) a self-contained program for gifted LD children, 2) basic placement in the regular classroom and pullout into the LD program and/or the gifted program and/or a resource program for gifted LD students, or 3) gifted and talented placement with pullout into the LD program or the regular classroom. Appropriate curriculum can also be designed within the regular classroom or a magnet school setting, if help is offered from specialists.

What Are The Curriculum Needs Of Gifted Learning Disabled Students?

Regardless of placement, gifted learning disabled students have both remediation and enrichment needs. Yet, quite often the sole focus is on their poor academic skills. This remediation emphasis often occurs because of the pressing classroom problems many of these students have, such as inappropriate academic or social behavior, extreme reluctance to take risks, short attention span, lack of any products to assess, avoidance of written assignments, and a well-developed ability to manipulate. Consequently many gifted LD students participate in enrichment activities only *after* other assignments are complete. By using this "contingency plan," we say to students: "we care most about what you cannot do." Enrichment and challenge activities become secondary.

Susan Baum (1988) strongly disagrees with this approach. In fact, she says these students need a supportive environment that values their strengths before anything else. She cites her research that shows gifted LD students have a low sense of success in school; therefore giving them remedial tasks only increases their sense of failure in the school setting. Tannenbaum and Baldwin (Tannenbaum & Baldwin, 1983) also support Baum's position. They call these children "paradoxical learners"—the harder the task, the better they do; it's the easy work they can't master. In short, gifted learning disabled students need challenge.

Therefore, gifted learning disabled students need a curriculum that addresses both their strengths and weaknesses. A number of suggestions are offered in Figure 2, while more ideas can be found in Baum, 1988; Daniels, 1983; Fox et al., 1983; Moller, 1984; Silverman, 1987; and Wolf & Gygi, 1981.

Conclusion

As educators of the gifted, it is our responsibility to serve *all* gifted students. Sometimes, the successes of the Einsteins and Edisons of the world, who succeeded without much school support, lull us into believing that all gifted learning disabled students can perform the same feats. However, evidence suggests that for every student who succeeds many more fail during their journey through the school system. In short, gifted learning disabled students desperately deserve and need appropriate services.

This is not to say that such a task will be easy. Working with gifted learning disabled students takes a strong commitment. They can be hard to work with and difficult to reach. This statement is particularly true if we are used to working with non-learning disabled gifted students. Behavior and social skills often get in the way, as well as the lack of academic skills. However, even given these difficulties, the reward of reaching a once unreachable student is well worth it. As one anonymous gifted learning disabled student says:

"How will I ever get any better,
If no one has the time to teach?
If I sit on the sidelines all my life,
What goals will I ever reach?
I can't keep up with kids in class,
Don't compare me to my brothers.
Just give me a chance to grow at my pace,
Without competing with the others.
Wish someone would try to teach me,
Though I can't learn like the rest.
If someone cared enough to reach me,
I promise, I'd really do my best."

FIGURE 2

Teaching Strategies For
Gifted Learning Disabled Students

1. Let the student watch others before attempting the task.
2. Use visuals and hands-on experiences.
3. Let the student discover her own method of problem-solving.
4. Give the student advanced material, even if easy material is not done.
5. Use material that is of interest and relevant to student.
6. Use modern technology to help the student compensate, such as computers, calculators, tape recorders.
7. Use bibliotherapy techniques.
8. Use contracts or reward systems.
9. Use a buddy system for less appealing tasks, such as library assignments.
10. Pair a gifted LD student with a gifted non-LD student.
11. Provide gifted learning disabled role models.
12. Break long assignments into shorter pieces.
13. Emphasize science, social studies, and fine arts.
14. Conduct structured oral discussions.
15. Do creative endeavors.
16. Allow students to "shine" in front of peers.
17. Provide mentors and intellectual peers.
18. Use self-talk techniques.

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The Bilingual Gifted:

VIABLE STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

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Who are the bilingual gifted? Why is it important that American educators be trained in identifying and nurturing bilingual gifted students? These are two questions that are addressed in this article.

Research indicates that there is an underrepresentation of bilingual students in gifted programs. This is happening because educators are not trained to assess students' cognitive abilities in languages other than English.

Efforts at both the state and national levels are encouraging school districts to identify larger numbers of bilingual and limited English proficient students for gifted programs. However, there is little encouragement given to train bilingual teachers and administrators to work with gifted students.

Bilingual educators need to be trained to identify bilingual gifted students and provide effective programming that addresses the students' intellectual, creative, and linguistic needs.

What does it mean in our American educational system to be both bilingual and gifted? It means valuing a student's high academic performance capabilities while simultaneously valuing his or her competency in listening, speaking, reading, or writing a second language.

As educators, we encourage students to study a "foreign language," such as German, Russian, or Japanese, but what kind of encouragement do we give to students who enter school already speaking a second language such as Spanish or French? Sometimes, assumptions are made that children with Hispanic surnames *are* bilingual and children with Anglo surnames *are* monolingual. Erroneous assumptions are also made that children who demonstrate verbal competency in a native language, such as Spanish, but limited proficiency in the English language, do not have superior cognitive ability.

Such assumptions and misplaced values must be addressed when developing and implementing programs for bilingual gifted students in our schools. This article proposes some viable strategies for improving the identification process and teaching strategies as they address the special needs of bilingual gifted students.

THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Traditionally, bilingual students have been underrepresented in gifted programs, although it is estimated that three to five percent of the Hispanic population are gifted and talented (Martinson, 1974). It has been almost seventeen years since the first research was conducted on gifted Mexican American children (Bernal & Reyna, 1974), yet including children from the Mexican American culture who speak the Spanish language is still not a common practice among American educators in gifted programs. Researchers have found that standardized test instruments, available only in the English language and then translated into the Spanish language with disregard for linguistic differences among Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican cultures, or

normed with insufficient numbers of bilingual students, could be reasons for the underrepresentation of bilingual students in gifted programs (Moreno, 1973; Torrance, 1977).

In geographical areas, such as the Rio Grande Valley, where bilingual students are abundant and gifted education is mandated, the problem of identifying bilingual gifted students is of tantamount concern. Coordinators and teachers in gifted programs learn through workshops, conferences, and courses about traditional practices using "multiple criteria," "cut-off scores," and "matrices" in the identification process. Educators in Rio Grande Valley school districts also learn through experience that these traditional practices need to be modified or discarded when they exclude bilingual and limited English proficient students from gifted programs.

Administrators and teachers need to be trained in collecting, analyzing and utilizing student data obtained from a variety of sources. These sources include standardized test information on cognitive and affective abilities and skills; professional assessment of student performance through interviews, problem solving activities, and creative product development; recorded behavioral observations of students by teachers, administrators, parents, and students themselves; and assessment of student attitudes, interests, strengths, needs, and learning styles.

Recommended practices

Before this process of data collection begins, educators need to plan and develop an evaluation design for determining effective procedures to be used with bilingual populations. Obvious modifications include translation of testing material, directions, and questions into the native language (Spanish) or selecting materials and activities that do not require interpretation, verbal, or written response in the English language. Identifying bilingual staff (administrators, teachers, aides, counselors) who can assist in the data collection, analysis, and evaluation stage of the identification process also is important. This may involve active recruiting on the part of the school district as well as additional training for school staff not traditionally involved in the identification of gifted students. Bilingual staff need to train and counsel parents of bilingual children in interpreting and providing information that can be helpful in planning for individual students in gifted programs.

Collecting and analyzing non-test data *first* will also enlarge the talent pool of potential candidates for the gifted program. Assessing the bilingual student's ability to think critically and creatively, and solve problems in the native language (Spanish) as well as in English should be an integral part of the identification process. If higher

levels of competency are measured in the native language (Spanish), this data should be recorded under "special language considerations," on a data summary sheet and should be assessed as a strength in the student candidate, rather than a deficit. Further, appropriate modifications recommended for future programming, such as continued interaction with and evaluation by trained bilingual staff working with the gifted program, should be considered.

Erroneous assumptions are also made that children who demonstrate verbal competency in a native language, such as Spanish, but limited proficiency in the English language, do not have superior cognitive ability.

Educators need to be trained in using Frasier's Talent Assessment Profile (1990), as it will allow them to visually interpret the data collected on individual students (see page 8). More importantly, for bilingual students, the profile will encourage educators to look at strengths and weaknesses in individual students and propose appropriate program modifications that address linguistic abilities and needs.

CURRICULAR AND PROGRAM STRATEGIES

Although local school districts are reinforced at the state and national levels to identify bilingual, limited English proficient, and economically disadvantaged students for gifted programs, little effort is being made to identify and train bilingual administrators and teachers to work with gifted students. Developing and modifying curriculum to address academic and linguistic needs requires staff who have been trained in utilizing effective teaching strategies for bilingual education as well as gifted education. In evaluating bilingual gifted students' cognitive skills, the teacher must be sensitive to children who may need more time to respond to a verbal or written question because they process information in their native language first, and then translate into English to communicate with the English-speaking instructor. Children from culturally diverse, linguistically different, and economically disadvantaged populations learn by experimenting and testing a variety of alternatives. Such a process is time consuming and is not rewarded by a high score on a timed test.

Researchers have found that the styles of learning and thinking used by culturally diverse and bilingual populations are different from Anglo and monolingual populations (Cohen, 1973; Ramirez, Casteneda, & Herold, 1974). My findings in a 1988 study conducted among 120 Hispanic and non-Hispanic seventh graders in California were consistent with earlier studies. Using the Style of Learning and Thinking (SOLAT) instrument (Torrance, McCarthy, & Kolesinski, 1988) consisting of 50 items based on the cumulative research findings concerning the specialized functions of the left and right hemispheres, I was able to analyze the learning and thinking preferences of bilingual and monolingual students. I found that bilingual students preferred using integrated hemisphere functioning when processing

information while their monolingual counterparts had a preference for left hemisphere functioning.

Recommended practices

Teachers of gifted students need to be trained in recognizing different learning and thinking styles among bilingual and monolingual populations. In addition to learning how to differentiate curriculum for gifted students, teachers, and administrators need to learn how to develop and modify curriculum activities as well as teaching strategies that will nurture different thinking and learning styles in students. Teachers in gifted programs need to learn a variety of questioning strategies that encourage students to analyze and synthesize ideas as well as solve problems in a logical manner and in an intuitive manner.

Teacher training and flexible administration is crucial to any educational program. For gifted programs, it means finding appropriate staff to meet the needs of gifted learners. Identifying and recruiting staff who are sensitive to the needs of all gifted students is an important task of school administration. Acknowledging that the gifted have cognitive, affective, and linguistic needs is especially important in school districts that have large populations of culturally diverse and linguistically different students. In schools where larger numbers of bilingual and limited English proficient students are being identified for gifted programs, particularly at the kindergarten and first grade level, it is imperative that bilingual staff be recruited as teachers, counselors, and coordinators.

To assist school districts in the Rio Grande Valley in providing differentiated learning experiences for bilingual gifted students and providing training opportunities for teachers and administrators to work with bilingual gifted students, the gifted program at the University of Texas—Pan American sponsors a Saturday program, Challenge, for gifted children ages 4 through 14 and an International High School for Bilingual Gifted Students in the summer. The Saturday program, which is located at four sites in the Rio Grande Valley from Brownsville to Rio Grande City, is coordinated by graduate students in the master's degree program in gifted education at UT-PA. This university-based program is unique in that it includes students from the Mexican side of the border and hires bilingual staff who can instruct gifted students who are bilingual as well as limited English proficient.

The International High School has been designed to address the academic, social, and linguistic needs of bilingual students from the United States, Mexico, and Canada. High school students who already speak two languages fluently are encouraged to learn a third language so that they can discuss solutions to problems addressing teenagers in the three

countries. Students then have the opportunity to practice their language and problem solving strategies as they travel each summer to one of the three countries.

If the United States is to maintain its leadership role among nations, then it must produce leaders who have the ability to communicate in more than one language.

Both the Challenge program and the International High School are laboratory schools for bilingual gifted youngsters in which new ideas are tested and evaluated. Data from both programs is being used by researchers as the basis for a longitudinal study of bilingual gifted students.

SUMMARY

In developing viable strategies for effective programming for bilingual gifted students, it is imperative that educators understand that students possess skills and competencies that are transferable across languages. Educators need to design and evaluate better methods for identifying students' abilities to think and solve problems in more than one language. Similarly, educators need to design and evaluate better methods for teaching students who are both bilingual *and* gifted. It is recommended that teachers and administrators be well trained in both gifted education and bilingual education.

By the 21st century, it is anticipated that the bilingual population in the United States will increase dramatically, If the United States is to maintain its leadership role among nations, then it must produce leaders who have the ability to communicate in more than one language. Bilingual gifted students who are identified and encouraged by educators and parents to develop their linguistic, intellectual, creative, and leadership abilities, can provide this talent pool of future leaders.

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An Update on The Javits Project:
IDENTIFYING AND SERVING DISADVANTAGED GIFTED YOUTH

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In 1990, the Texas Education Agency became one of the first 28 recipients for federal funding under the provisions of the Jacob K. Javits Gifted Students Education Act of 1988. Evelyn Levsky Hiatt, who coordinates the Agency's efforts relating to the Javits grant, offers a brief overview of the project, emphasizing preliminary information on the Texas Student Portfolio.

There is increased interest these days in accountability of the public education system. There also is increased interest in assuring that our schools are both equitable and excellent. How may we reflect these two interests? How can we assure that schools are seeking to incorporate both of the elusive qualities of equity and excellence?

One way is through an investigation of the programs that school districts establish for gifted and advanced level students. Why the program for gifted students? If we believe that all students can learn and that all student populations are capable of high performance, and if we are equitably assessing all students' abilities, then all groups of students should be fairly represented in programs designed to meet the needs of our most able students. Thus far, however, it must be admitted that this has not been the case. Minority students, and particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds, are not fairly represented in these programs. Ortiz (1989, 152) offers data from a report from the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights that revealed "minority groups such as blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are underrepresented by as much as 70 percent in gifted programs."

This exclusion is harmful for two reasons. First, it sends a negative message to underrepresented populations who are not included in the programs. It implies that they are somehow less able than those in other populations. Just as harmful, however, is what it says to those populations who are included in the program. It sends a message to them that they are somehow superior to other groups of students—that simply by being born into a certain race or economic class they were bestowed with rights and abilities that other students do not possess and never will. Such a message is clearly incorrect. It also is clearly in conflict with American principles of equal rights and opportunity for all citizens. It was to redress this doubly negative message that the Texas Education Agency actively sought participa-

tion in the federal effort to determine new and better ways to identify and serve those populations that are underrepresented in programs for gifted students.

The problem of underrepresentation in Texas is of more concern than it might be in other states. As the chart in Figure 1 indicates, although Texas has a school population that includes a majority of ethnic and racial minorities, the program for gifted students fails to reflect this trend. Further, unlike other states with laws that block innovative approaches to student assessment, Texas has rules that offer districts great latitude in student selection. Mindful of the research in the field, the State Board of Education adopted rules that stress the use of multiple criteria, require that both standardized and non-standardized measures be used, and that a student selection committee make the final determination as to which students would most benefit from program services. In fact, in one of the clearest messages for equity, the State Board requires that "Data and procedures used during the identification process shall be designed to assure that the population of the program for gifted students reflects the population of the total district." (19 TAC, Chapter 89, Subchapter C). Despite these efforts, actual practices are lagging far behind the sought after results.

FIGURE 1

Ethnicity	1990-91			
	G/T Students		All Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
African American	15,956	6.90	487,077	14.40
American Indian	310	0.13	6,294	0.19
Asian	8911	3.90	67,743	2.00
Hispanic	41,305	17.90	1,145,765	33.90
White	164,167	71.20	1,676,008	49.50
TOTAL	230,649	100.30	3,382,887	99.99

Harry Passow (1986, 223) has noted that one paradox regarding education of the gifted is that, "so much has remained unchanged...and yet so much has changed." Despite changes in the student population, despite new State Board rules that provide great flexibility in student assessment, districts tend to rely on traditional standardized tests for program placement. Other measures are reviewed, but over and over, provisions such as, "Students must score at or above the 97% in order to be considered for the program" are found in district identification procedures. In some cases, students who clearly are succeeding in the program are exited simply because their test scores dropped. Such practices are never acceptable because they are arbitrarily exclusionary and because they do not adequately reflect true student ability or potential. However, if the Agency is going to insist upon a more open assessment system, it also has to offer acceptable options. The Javits program provides the opportunity to assist districts in their search for more equitable student assessment.

When federal funding became available under the Jacob K. Javits Gifted Students Education Act of 1988, the Texas Education Agency was one of 231 applicants who sought funding to meet the grant's objective: to investigate non-traditional approaches to identifying and serving those populations underrepresented in programs for the gifted. These included not just racial and ethnic minorities, but rurally isolated students and girls in fields such as science and mathematics. In 1990, the Agency became one of only 28 grant recipients and began its efforts to assist districts in living up to the principles embodied in the State Board's rules.

As noted by Frasier (see page 2), there are four major problems that hold underrepresented populations back from being identified and served in gifted programs. Those four problems relate to the

attitudes of educators regarding the abilities of *disadvantaged children; screening procedures that* limit access to the program for gifted students; the assessment measures, which favor IQ and achievement tests; and the emphasis on accommodations, rather than adaptations, to the curriculum. These four themes became the focus of the Javits project. During the 1990-91 school year, Agency staff worked with individual campuses and districts, as well as with six regional education service centers, and field tested two non-traditional assessment measures. Although these measures are still being refined, the information that was gathered provides interesting insights into the problems that confront us. However, it is important to stress that these measures are not designed to take the place of other assessments, including standardized tests. Rather, they are to be used as a complement to them, to provide a holistic portrait of the child that will assist educators in appropriately developing programs that meet the needs of students and in appropriately placing students in those programs.

Remember, unlike an objective test that provides a snapshot of a child on a given day, the portfolio provides a videotape that takes place over time.

The two measures that are being field tested are the Texas Student Portfolio (TSP) and Activity Placemats (the Mats), both of which were developed by Dr. Sandra Kaplan as part of an earlier Agency project, the Institutes for Teachers of the Young Disadvantaged Gifted. Both are designed to assess some of the characteristics that are traditionally associated with gifted students, focusing on traits associated with critical and creative thinking. They are intended for use with all students and should be used as part of the general program provided in the early grades. While this article will focus on the TSP, future articles will discuss the Activity Placemats and their use in the assessment/curriculum process.

The TSP, like other portfolios, is a collection of the student's best work. Unlike other portfolios, however, that currently are being used in other states, the TSP does not measure skills related to *specific subjects. In fact, the eight descriptors,* like those that form the basis of the Mats, relate to student learning characteristics. The eight descriptors, included in Figure 2, focus on skills related to learning, creativity, and motivation. It is recommended that a minimum of six items be included in the portfolio, which is reviewed by a committee or team of educators who have received training on the TSP. Data from the portfolio then serve as one indicator that would be reviewed by the screening committee for the program for gifted students.

The TSP reflects current research on student assessment for programs for gifted students in the following ways.

- It is inclusive rather than exclusive in its assessment of students. It is recommended that all students keep a portfolio, particularly in the early grades. Every student is then, in a sense, nominated for the program for gifted students. Nominating all students does not dilute efforts at identification, but enhances them. Frasier (1984) suggests that "soliciting inquiries from a variety of sources does not compromise a decision; such solicitations enrich a decision." By using the TSP as a "child find" measure, students who might otherwise be overlooked are encouraged to show their best efforts to school decision makers.

- It assesses all student products against the same eight descriptors. These descriptors focus on manifestations of behaviors related to learning ability, creative ability, and motivation. Additionally, they are not age specific and can be used with students at any grade. This means that, while the sophistication of the products clearly will change, the behaviors that are being assessed remain constant throughout the kindergarten through grade twelve continuum.

- It includes products from both in-school and out-of-school settings. Hagen (1980) stresses the importance of focusing on out-of-school

FIGURE 2

Texas Student Portfolio Profile Descriptors

The descriptors used on the Texas Student Portfolio Profile relate to characteristics of learning, creativity, and motivation. Notice that the focus is on how students **learn** rather than on what they know. As an example, the student's use of language is emphasized rather than the level of the student's vocabulary.

Descriptor	Behaviors Associated with Gifted Students	Evidence of Behaviors As Manifested in Student Products
Unusual presentation of an idea	Use of expressive speech (Torrance, 1977); Tries to do things in different, unusual or imaginative ways (Clark, 1988).	Given a class assignment, students may develop products that are very different from those of other students. Products may appear eccentric, odd, or offbeat but are highly original and successful at either meeting the class assignment or student's objective for developing products. Student may use language in unusual and/or unique ways.
Work advanced beyond age or grade level	Has advanced ideas for age, interested in "adult" issues (e.g., sex, race, religion) more than usual for age level (Witty, 1955; Ward, 1961; Schuman, 1979); Exhibit special skills that are unusual for their age or grade (Hagen, 1980).	In younger children, products include details not normally provided in products of other students of similar age. Older students may address issues not usually of interest to chronological peers. Products from students at all ages may reflect whimsical or sophisticated sense of humor, either in the product itself or in the student's description of it. Products may reflect knowledge of material or technology not previously introduced in class.
Complex or intricate presentation of an idea	Originality of ideas in problem solving (Torrance, 1977); Preference for complexity, asymmetry, open-endedness (Clark, 1979); Preference for complexity, difficulty, and novelty in tasks (Hagen, 1980).	Students frequently include elaborate detail in both written and visual products that reflect considerable planning and organization. Often, students will include evidence of sophisticated problem solving skills in development of products. This descriptor frequently is evidenced in conjunction with "Unusual presentation of an idea."
In-depth understanding of an idea or skill	Is a keen and alert observer, usually "sees more" or "gets more" out of a story, film, etc. than others (Carroll, 1940; National Education Association, 1960; Witty, 1958); Able to set up new problem, senses what is important (Schuman, 1979); Students breadth and depth of information (Hagen, 1980).	Students often evidence understanding of the "big idea" of a discipline or topic and apply it in their product. Products often reflect out-of-school interests, and students may comment on long-term interest in a topic or an intense interest unusual for students at that age.
Resourceful and/or clever use of materials	Ability to improvise with commonplace materials and objects (Torrance, 1977); Innovative use of common materials in the classroom or outside it (Hagen, 1980).	Students use household "stuff" or innovative vocabulary in development of products. Products often reflect keen sense of humor, puns, or new and novel ways of using language and/or materials.
Evidence of support of research for the idea	Quality of examples, illustrations, or elaborations that a student uses in explaining something, in describing events, or in telling stories, extensiveness of student's exploratory behavior (Hagen, 1980); Synthesize ideas and information from a lot of different sources (Clark, 1988).	Students use elaborative examples and illustrations to expand upon the main ideas of a product. Research often is done at a level not normally expected at student's age level. This can include the use of techniques such as informal interviews or surveys in younger children or the use of unexpected primary and secondary resources in the products of older students. In some cases, extensive reading, questioning, and/or research has taken place prior to the development of the product.
Organized to communicate effectively	Able to organize themselves and ideas (Martinson, 1974); Likes to organize and bring structure to things, people, and situations (Gowen & Demos, 1964).	Products are presented in a clear, concise, and sequenced manner. In both creative and expository products, an effective medium is selected to deliver the message and to communicate it to the selected audience. Visual products catch the eye and further enhance the main idea of the topic presented.
Evidence of high interest and perseverance	Becomes absorbed and truly involved in topics or problems (Brandwein, 1955); Persistence on complicated tasks; extensiveness of student's exploratory behavior (Hagen, 1980); Enduring interest or curiosity in some field (Baska, 1989).	Products reflect long-term interest or commitment on the part of the student or may reflect outside-of-classroom study, reading, or concerns. A teacher or parent may indicate that the student worked on the product longer than would be expected for age and grade level.

Developed by Evelyn Levsky Hiatt and Dr. Judith Martin

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efforts because, "children spend a relatively small part of their time in school, and the opportunities they have to show certain abilities are limited in many school settings." By requesting products from the home setting, the TSP develops in parents an awareness of the behaviors of gifted children, and encourages parental involvement in the assessment process.

- It offers the opportunity to observe student growth over a specific time period and focuses on how each student progresses on an individual basis. A student who has not had many enriching experiences may have products that seem less exciting than his or her age peers. The TSP enables educators to observe how quickly students pick up skills and develop more sophisticated products once they have been exposed to school experiences and materials.

- It empowers teachers by increasing teacher competencies and skills. Training both on gifted education and on the manifestation of giftedness in student products is a part of the portfolio assessment process. While this is done to assure greater inter-rater reliability among assessment committee members, use of this training does not end at the conclusion of the selection process. The training encourages teachers to focus on student strengths and improves instruction provided to all students. As teachers become more proficient at assessing student abilities, they become more proficient at modifying the curriculum to meet student needs.

- It provides an opportunity for those who participate in the assessment process to better understand the diverse cultural and economic backgrounds from which the students come. Those cultural and economic factors that impact particular student products are not used as an excuse, but as an explanation, for the differences one might find in the work of various children. Maker (1989) notes that during the assessment process, "Each child must be viewed as an individual, with knowledge of inter- and intragroup differences in values and other cultural characteristics used as the means to *interpret the behaviors observed* in students, rather than to predict what behaviors will be exhibited. [Italics part of original quotation.]"

- It links the identification process to program and curriculum. Evaluating portfolios provides insight into student interests, strengths, and abilities. This information should be used to develop a curriculum tailored to student needs and self selected areas of study.

When used in conjunction with other assessment instruments, the Texas Student Portfolio provides information on students that enables educators to obtain a more comprehensive view of students' strengths and potential.

Both the Mats and the TSP serve to shift the emphasis of the assessment process to what Ernesto Bernal refers to as "a search for talent (1974, p.7)." Bernal goes on to stress the need to look at how quickly students progress rather than on their school achievement tests that focus on content that may be foreign to them. In other words, the emphasis should be on how they learn rather than on what they know. Even after students are initially selected for the program for gifted students, the TSP should be maintained by the student as he/she moves through the primary grades. Remember, unlike an objective test that provides a snapshot of a child on a given day, the portfolio provides a videotape that takes place over time. Educators have the opportunity to see how the child develops as he or she becomes more acclimated to school.

Success during the first year of a three year project is difficult to assess. Neither the portfolio nor the Mats are ready for general distribution, but a great deal was learned from both. One of the exciting positives about the TSP is that teachers report that children become more analytical about their own work. Many students indiscriminately place products in the portfolio. When the teacher asks the student to select his or her <u>best</u> work, the child is forced to review his or her own efforts and determine what was well done and why. Even

very young students start to be more discerning in reviewing their products, thus applying critical thinking skills.

Also, parents become more involved in the school process. Teachers reported that most parents did not respond very well after receiving a letter from the school explaining the portfolio, but that interest increased after parent/teacher conferences or larger group sessions such as PTA meetings. Involvement of parents in their children's learning is always beneficial and the TSP offers parents the opportunity to support their child's efforts for success.

There also were some problems discovered during this first year. Training related to both measures must be enhanced to include a component on cultural diversity and its impact on student products and behaviors. Characteristics of gifted students are the same regardless of their background; however, the manifestation of those characteristics can be very different. As an example, some students will express intense curiosity by manipulating objects and studying them closely instead of asking the teacher a lot of questions. This year, training packages that address the review of student products and that diminish the impact negative attitudes can have on student assessment will be field tested in selected districts.

One distressing finding related to the insecurity that many teachers felt regarding their own perceptions about student potential. Over and over, a teacher would remark that a particular student did extremely well on the Mats or had exciting and innovative products in her portfolio. This would be followed by, "But they can't be nominated for the gifted program—their readiness scores were so low!" Hopefully, as teachers become more comfortable with these non-traditional procedures, they also will gain more confidence in their own abilities to assess student potential.

Teachers and administrators also complained that the portfolio took a great deal of time to process. It is true that each portfolio can take as much as 20 minutes to review, but the information that is gathered is extremely beneficial to planning the child's school program. Most important, it must be admitted that the easy part of student assessment is over. As we learn more about intelligence and its multi-faceted nature, it will be harder and harder to rely on objective data to make decisions for us. The best way to make a knowledgeable decision about the placement and program that is appropriately challenging for a child is to talk about that child's performance and possibilities with other educators. If we are committed to the idea that education should be based on the individual needs of the child, we must analyze the individual child. That is a time consuming process, but one that is rewarding, both to those in the educational profession and, most important, to the children whose futures we hold in our hands.

Clearly, our work on the TSP and on the Activity Placemats is just beginning. Indeed, they only represent the first step of the total Javits project. During the upcoming school year, as we refine the portfolio and placemats, work will begin on developing a curriculum that has been adapted to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Because they reflect a desire to tailor programs and practices to the needs of students, rather than forcing students to fit into preconceived programs, the rich variety of options that are being developed by Javits projects throughout the country ultimately will strengthen the educational system.

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Identifying and Serving Diverse Populations: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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How do the rules adopted by the State Board of Education facilitate the identification of gifted students from diverse populations?

The State Board of Education rules regarding student participation are based upon best practices and recommendations in the literature. As an example, the *National Report on Identification of Gifted and Talented Youth,* commissioned by the United States Department of Education in 1982, states that both formal and informal assessment procedures are necessary to avoid bias. Patton, Prillaman, and Van Tassel-Baska (1989) recommended that state departments of education assist in increasing identification and services for disadvantaged gifted students by developing policies that allow for both qualitative and evaluative sources of data, including nominations, individual tests/assessments, and past performance. Maker (1989, 296) advocates using "a case study approach in which a variety of assessment data is interpreted in the context of a student's individual characteristics, and decisions are made by a team of qualified individuals."

Texas requirements to use multiple criteria, including both subjective and objective measures, and a committee trained in gifted education to make final decisions regarding placement of students in the gifted program are consistent with these recommendations. The broad definition of gifted/talented students used in Texas is also indicative of efforts to be inclusive in the identification process.

There is a State Board of Education rule that requires that the population of the program for gifted students reflect the population of the total district. Does this mean I must adopt a quota system in order to meet this rule?

You absolutely should not establish a quota system in order to meet this rule. Frasier (1989) states that a quota system implies that certain children may be "second-class" gifted. It is our belief that it is not necessary to use quota systems when proper procedures are followed and alternative and non-traditional assessments are used. The rule, 19 TAC §89.51(c), states that data and procedures used during the identification process shall be designed to assure that the population of the program for gifted students reflects the population of the total district. By using committees to assess collected data, we are using procedures that will allow us to make decisions about appropriate educational placement of students. Stress should be placed on the data collected, procedures used to collect the data, and the committee review of the data. By reviewing the tests we use, analyzing the types of questions we ask teachers about their students, and by observing children in their "in-school" and "out-of-school" activities, a clearer picture should emerge. As suggested in Frasier's article, we must do more than give lip service to the recommendation of using a variety of sources to identify gifted behaviors.

Isn't it more difficult to identify students from diverse populations in the primary grades, particularly those who may come from economically impoverished backgrounds? Shouldn't we wait until they have been in the system awhile and see how they progress?

In 1978, Witty suggested that gifted minority students be identified as early as possible. Alexinia Baldwin, Ernesto M. Bernal, Irving Sato, and others have recommended that gifted students from special populations be identified at an early age so that appropriate services can be provided and gaps in skills and abilities can be avoided.

This question has been asked often and seems to reflect the general problems we have had in identifying gifted students. Many of our practices in the past have indicated that we place our confidence in test scores rather than professional judgment regarding student behaviors and potential capabilities. One advantage to using non-traditional assessment measures such as the Texas Student Portfolio is that it allows us to look at how rapidly students progress once we are able to begin the nurturing they may not have had in the past.

One first grade teacher reported this past year that while she felt she had always had high expectations for all students, she now realized that many minority students are capable of doing much more than she had thought previously. After comparing results of the Ravens Test and a traditional verbal test on which the district had been relying, she realized her expectations had not been high enough for many minority students. She said that she looked at the scores on the Ravens and thought, "If they can score that high on this test, then I should be taking them along at a faster pace in my classroom rather than locking them all into the same category." After making the adjustments, she reported they are keeping right up with her. This is an example of the attitudinal changes to which Frasier refers.

You refer to non-traditional assessments. What do you mean?

Traditional assessments would include intelligence tests, achievement tests, grade point averages, and teacher input. Non-traditional assessments would include portfolios, interviews, situational observations, and parent input.

I have heard some criticism concerning the use of intelligence tests in the identification of gifted children from diverse populations. Would you explain the abuse of such tests?

Intelligence tests may be used effectively if you remember they are only one source of information. Rigid cut-offs enabling a child with an IQ of 131 to enter a gifted program, but denying entrance to a classmate who scores only 128 often are used (Kaufman and Harrison, 1986). This procedure would not be appropriate for assessing students from any population. Reliance on IQ tests alone has greatly diminished the potential number of students who are offered program services (Cohen, 1988). Renzulli indicates that "more (numbers and percentages) creative persons come from below the 95th percentile than above it, and if such cut-off scores are needed to determine entrance into special programs, we may be guilty of actually discriminating against persons who have the highest potential for high levels of accomplishment" (1978, 182).

Intelligence tests also tend to be weighted toward verbal competence. Because of this weighting, cultural and language backgrounds can negatively affect an IQ score (Richert, Alvino, McConnel, 1982). A nonverbal intelligence test may be more appropriate for some populations. Regardless of the type of test used, it should be only one of multiple sources used for assessment.

Isn't it unfair to use one test for some students and another test for others?

No. It is important to use assessment measures that allow strengths of individual children to emerge. A child who does not have command of the English language would be severely penalized by a verbal test in English. Cohen (1988) says, "Minority language students who are not considered gifted may in fact be very gifted, but are unable to express themselves in English." Therefore, nonverbal tests are sometimes more appropriate for some children.

What is an example of a nonverbal intelligence test?

In the Javits project described in this issue, the nonverbal test being used is the Ravens Progressive Matrices. The criticisms about the possible bias on intelligence tests and the current emphasis on nonbiased and least biased assessment have led to the development of intelligence tests that attempt to be more fair to minority groups. The K-ABC is one such test (Kaufman, 1986). According to Kaufman, the K-ABC yields higher scores for African Americans, Hispanic, and American Indian children. Possible reasons for the higher scores are the deemphasis of acquired facts, applied skills, and verbal expression on the K-ABC's intelligence scales and the inclusion of tasks that tap a broader range of mental functions.

Several tests of intelligence are designed to measure intellectual abilities in students from linguistically and culturally different backgrounds. The national report referred to earlier lists such tests.

Other standardized tests, such as achievement tests, are often used in the identification of gifted students. What recommendations do you make concerning these tests and identifying students from diverse populations?

Using rigid cut-off scores to make decisions about identification of students for the gifted program should be avoided when using any test. Additionally, the committee reviewing the data should look at achievement test data with several other factors in mind. By looking at scores from more than one year, gains in achievement can be analyzed. Rapid gains rather than a specific score yield a great amount of information concerning learning abilities of children. Subtests also yield valuable information. Ann Evans deBernard (1985) warns against using English standardized reading tests with Hispanic bilingual children. She states as long as English reading test scores continue to be used as the major criterion for entrance into gifted programs, the cost for many of our brightest bilingual children will be exclusion from the ranks of their cognitive equals. McKenzie (1986) and many others have stated that excessive reliance on standardized tests will cause us to miss some of our most promising students. We should be more concerned about how children learn and their potential learning abilities than what they already know or have achieved.

Some have said that the behaviors or characteristics of giftedness are the same across cultures, but the manifestations may be different. Give me an example.

The following examples reflect how children in different cultures exhibit the same behavioral characteristics. While many children exhibit curiosity by asking repeated questions, Hispanic children may exhibit the same trait by touching and feeling, thus closely examining an object. Perrone and Aleman (1983) reported that children in Puerto Rico seek the advice of their family rather than act independently. "Respect for elders is often valued more than precociousness, which can be seen as disrespectful. Similarly, the Mexican-American child who respects elders, the law, and authority becomes vulnerable in a school system which values individual competition, initiative, and self-direction" (Cohen, 1988).

If I use different assessment measures, will I be able to use the same curriculum or will I have to modify it? Does this mean the program will be diluted?

The underlying premise of providing a program for gifted students is that gifted students are capable of going beyond what is normally provided in the regular school program. Finding gifted students from diverse populations would also indicate that curricular modifications need to be made for these students. Individual needs should be addressed within a program for gifted students and certainly there will be individual needs among gifted students in special populations as well. Sandra Kaplan has often reminded us that the goals and objectives are fixed ends and it is the activities, or "means" to the "ends," that may be modified and adjusted. In fact, there should be multiple means to reach a fixed end.

Emphasis needs to be placed on training bilingual, ESL staff, and special education teachers to assist in meeting the needs of gifted students within their respective populations.

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List co-presenters, if any, as name should appear in program:
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Please include the following information and attach to completed proposal form:

A. Title of workshop
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C. Program description (for conference program: 50-word limit)
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VI. Intended audience: Check appropriate blank(s).

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_____
Signature of Presenter

_____
Date Signed

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
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